

## **Statement of the fifth meeting of the Lima Group on the situation in Venezuela**

February 13, 2018

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Saint Lucia, in light of the decision adopted by the National Electoral Council of Venezuela to unilaterally call for presidential elections to be held on April 22, 2018, without having reached an agreement with the opposition, as the Government of Venezuela had committed to, and in accordance with their Declaration of January 23, 2018, declare the following:

1. We firmly reject the aforementioned decision, which renders it impossible to hold democratic, transparent and credible elections with the participation of all political actors in Venezuela, according to international standards and under international observation, and reiterate that elections that do not meet these standards will lack any legitimacy and credibility.
2. We urge the Government of Venezuela to reconsider the call for presidential elections, in accordance with the preceding paragraph and, in compliance with their own legislation, to set a new electoral calendar.
3. We underscore that free and fair elections cannot take place with the existence of political prisoners, without the full participation of political parties and with political leaders imprisoned or arbitrarily disqualified, with an electoral authority under government control, without the participation of millions of Venezuelan citizens who live abroad and are unable to vote, originally called for by the Constituent Assembly, which lacks the legitimacy or the legal power to do so and whose existence and decisions we do not recognize.
4. We take note of the report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights entitled “Democratic Institutions, the Rule of Law and Human Rights in Venezuela” that documents the serious deterioration of respect for human rights and the grave political, economic, and social crisis that has afflicted Venezuela for the past two years—especially in 2017.
5. We take note of the decision announced by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to conduct a preliminary examination of the

situation in Venezuela regarding crimes against humanity that occurred during the 2017 protests.

6. Given the continued and serious deterioration of democratic institutions in Venezuela, and based on the Quebec Declaration adopted at the III Summit of the Americas in 2001, which states that "...any unconstitutional alteration or interruption of the democratic order in a state of the Hemisphere constitutes an insurmountable obstacle to the participation of that state's government in the Summit of the Americas process", the Government of Peru has decided to reconsider the participation of the Government of Venezuela in the VIII Summit of the Americas, in Lima. The members of the Lima Group respect this decision.
7. We reiterate our concern for the growing deterioration of the humanitarian situation and implore the Government of Venezuela to allow, without delay, the opening of a humanitarian corridor that can help to mitigate the serious effects of the shortage of food and medicines.
8. In light of the increasing exodus of thousands of Venezuelans fleeing the grave crisis that they face in their home country, we agree to coordinate efforts to respond to this difficult situation in an orderly and safe manner and in solidarity.
9. We express our appreciation for the work and efforts undertaken by Chile and Mexico in pursuit of an agreement between the Parties in the negotiations promoted by the Dominican Republic.